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**For Immediate Release**  
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## **TRUMP SENDS LAND SOVEREIGNTY BACK TO UTAH**

### **Shrinks 2,000,000 acres of Bears Ears, Grand Staircase Monuments**



**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, Congressional Western Caucus Chairman **Paul A. Gosar D.D.S. (AZ-04)**, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, Chief Defense and Interior Officer **Chris Stewart (UT-02)**, Western Caucus Members **Raúl Labrador (ID-01)**, **Andy Biggs (AZ-05)**, **Doug Lamborn (CO-05)** and **Tom Emmer (MN-06)**, and Congressman **John Curtis (UT-03)** issued statements following President Trump's announcement of modifications to the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante Monuments

**Congressman Gosar** said, "Today's announcement by President Trump shows that he and Secretary Zinke are committed to smart, restrained and proper application of the Antiquities Act. His decision takes power from unaccountable Washington bureaucrats doing the dirty work of special-interest groups and gives it *back to the people* where it belongs. By shrinking the national monument footprint in Utah by more than two million acres, President Trump is correcting past overreach by previous presidents, supporting the multiple-use doctrine for public lands required by federal law and giving local communities a voice by restoring traditional uses. And unlike past Presidents, President Trump heard the people, listened closely to their ideas, and *acted*. Thank you, President Trump, for keeping another promise and taking action to ensure past presidents abuse of a more than one hundred-year-old law doesn't lock-up the West."

**Congressman Bishop** said, "I applaud President Trump for recognizing the limitations of the law. Americans of all political stripes should commend him for reversing prior administrations' abuses of the Antiquities Act and instead exercising his powers within the scope of authority granted by Congress. These new proclamations are a first step towards protecting identified antiquities without disenfranchising the local people who work and manage these areas. The next steps will be to move beyond symbolic gestures of protection and create substantive protections and enforcement and codify in law a meaningful management role for local governments, tribes and other stakeholders."

"The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument resides in my district. I have seen firsthand the damage that the monument has caused to the local economy. My constituents have been in a desperate need of change, and today President Trump delivered. President Trump had the courage

that no other president had. He listened to local voices that had been left out of the decision-making process for too long. On behalf of the county commissioners, the state legislators who represent the area, and the entire federal delegation, we say thank you, Mr. President,” said **Congressman Stewart**.

President Trump’s reductions of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante Monuments in Utah are a welcome relief to western landowners,” said **Congressman Biggs**. “The west has been negatively affected for decades, and government has not constrained its unlawful acquisition of these lands. Earlier this year, I led a letter with Chairman Gosar to Secretary Zinke to recommend the total rescission of these two monuments. I am glad that the two monuments will be significantly reduced, and I trust that the Trump administration will continue to relinquish the federal government’s grasp on these lands.

**Congressman Labrador**, “I support President Trump’s decision to correct his predecessors’ overreach and scale back the monument designations to reflect local concerns and respect the right of ordinary Americans to make a living. Radical environmentalists will howl, but the fact remains that the Antiquities Act has been abused by presidents of both parties. Now we need to move forward on a permanent legislative solution to restrain abuse of presidential power over our public lands.”

“I support the President’s decision. This rolls back harmful overreach by the previous administration. Instead of using the law to protect antiquities, it’s been wrongfully used to restrict development. It’s also made it more difficult to take care of our national lands,” said **Congressman Lamborn**.

“The President’s action today and the House’s action to pass the MINER Act last week demonstrate a renewed commitment of returning power from Washington bureaucrats back to the states,” said **Congressman Emmer**, whose [MINER Act](#) will protect Minnesota’s right to explore and, if environmentally appropriate, mine valuable precious metals. “It’s high time the federal government allow local economies to flourish and trust the land to the people who live there.”

“I am grateful to the President for coming to Utah to help us resolve this important issue,” **Congressman Curtis** said. “Now that the President has created two new monuments in my congressional district, the time has come for congress to ensure that these sites are managed the right way. In the coming days, I look forward to introducing legislation to ensure we are just doing that.”

## **Background:**

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, Western Caucus sent a letter signed by 24 Members of Congress encouraging President Trump “to think big and act big league” in his monuments review (Executive Order 13792, April 26, 2017). To read the full letter and recommendations click [HERE](#).

This letter emphasized the signers' consensus that monuments must be statutorily compliant – i.e. in keeping with the “smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects” clause of the Antiquities Act, and that they must be of demonstrated scientific or historic interest. As such, the parameters forming this consensus necessarily demand the shrinking or rescission of a majority of the monuments under review.

President Obama designated or expanded 34 national monuments, more than any other president in history. These unilateral declarations locked-up more than 553 million acres of land and water.

Today’s actions by President Trump shrink the national monument footprint in Utah by more than two million acres.

*Courtesy of the White House:*

**RESPONSIBLE LAND MANAGEMENT: President Donald J. Trump is modifying two national monuments to continue to protect objects of significance while prioritizing public use and access.**

-Today, President Trump is signing two proclamations modifying the boundaries of the Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument in Utah.

-Bears Ears National Monument will be modified to two units named Shash Jáa, Navajo for Bears Ears, and Indian Creek, encompassing a total of 228,784 acres of land.

- Bears Ears was originally designated in 2016 to encompass nearly 1.5 million acres, including a patchwork of Federal, State, and private land.
- This modification will restore the majority of the National Forest and Bureau of Land Management land to the management status existing prior to the 2016 designation.

-Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument will be modified to three units encompassing a combined 1,006,341 acres, an area larger than the state of Rhode Island.

- Grand Staircase was originally designated in 1996 by President Clinton largely for political purposes.

-Presidents have modified the boundaries to remove lands from monuments 18 times in the past. The most significant reduction occurred in 1915 when President Woodrow Wilson halved Mount Olympus National Monument, which is now a National Park.

**ENDING OVERREACH ON PUBLIC LAND: President Trump is ending past overreach and abuse of the monument review process under the Antiquities Act that has closed off land to the public, while continuing to protect objects of significance.**

-The Antiquities Act requires that objects be of historic or scientific interest, that the area reserved to protect the objects be the smallest area compatible, and that monuments be designated on Federal land only.

-Since 1996, several national monuments designations have gone beyond the intent of the Antiquities Act—to limit protected areas to the smallest area compatible—and now encompass millions of acres.

- In 1906, President Teddy Roosevelt designated the first national monument at Devils Tower, which was less than 1,200 acres.

-"Objects of historic or scientific interest" is a term that has been stretched to include landscape areas, biodiversity, "viewsheds," World War II desert bombing craters, and "remoteness."

- Past administrations have abused the designation of objects as national monuments to fill in pre-identified boundaries that mirror failed Congressional attempts to make protective land designations.

-Monument external boundaries often encompass private land, and in the case of the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument, the expansion contained 38 percent private land within the external boundary.

-Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is the poster child for Antiquities Act overreach and abuse, having been designated to assist President Bill Clinton's reelection campaign and end the development of a coal project.

**A NEW POLICY FOR LAND MANAGEMENT: President Trump and Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke will work to put in place new land management policies to protect objects while prioritizing public access, facilitating infrastructure development, and allowing traditional uses of the land.**

-The Trump Administration is continuing to protect public land, and is keeping parts of monuments to protect objects of interest within the smallest areas compatible.

- The Trump Administration is not going to sell public lands wholesale.
- The Trump Administration will protect objects in the "smallest area compatible" with the proper care of the objects to be protected.

-The Trump Administration is making sure local communities have a voice by restoring traditional "multiple use" activities on Federal lands and waters.

- This will increase economic growth and prosperity, especially in rural communities, by allowing grazing, commercial fishing, logging, and in some cases, mineral development.
- Monument designations should be used to protect objects and not to unnecessarily restrain public access.

-Improving and developing infrastructure will help the American people experience our public lands that have been made inaccessible due to past overreach.

- Some monument designations prevent construction of future roads and other facilities, making the land inaccessible for use.
- Restrictions on vegetative management and maintenance activities have led to poorly maintained roads and even closures.

-Monument designations have greatly restricted multiple-uses like grazing, timber harvest, fishing, resource development, infrastructure upgrades, and motorized recreation.

- Designating too much land for a national monument is harmful to the local tax base via the elimination or unnecessary restriction of grazing, timber and mineral activity and leases, as well as the restricting of access to hunting and fishing opportunities.

**A TRANSPARENT REVIEW PROCESS: President Trump and his Administration are being open and transparent in the review of monuments.**

-The President's proclamation follows an open and transparent review process originally initiated by President Trump's Executive Order 13792, "Review of Designations under the Antiquities Act."

- President Trump's Executive Order limited the review to monuments designated after January 1, 1996, and over 100,000 acres in size, or monuments that Secretary Zinke deemed to have been created without adequate public input.
- The review only covers only 27 of the more than 150 monuments that the Act has been used to designate or expand.

-Secretary Zinke visited eight monuments in six States and personally held more than 60

meetings with hundreds of local stakeholders.

- Individuals and organizations representing all sides of the debate were involved, ranging from environmental organizations to county commissioners and local residents.
- Secretary Zinke met with Tribal representatives, including from the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition in Salt Lake City.

-Secretary of the Interior Zinke opened a formal comment period on regulations.gov, for the first time ever, of the review of monuments designated under the Antiquities Act.

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